

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-11, 13-17 and 24-95 were pending in this application at the mailing of the present Office Action. Claims 38-41 have been cancelled in this paper, and thus claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-11, 13-17, 24-37 and 42-95 are presently pending. Claims 1, 6, 10, 11, 24, 30, 32-37, 42-45, 47, 48, 51, 57, 70 and 83 have been amended in this paper.

As a preliminary matter, the undersigned representative would like to thank Examiner Nadav for holding a personal interview on 5 April 2006 in which agreement was reached that the foregoing amendments overcome the prior art rejection set forth in the previous Office Action. More specifically, amended claim 1 corresponds to the amendment suggested by the Examiner as distinguishing claim 1 over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 5,677,244 ("Venkatraman") and U.S. Patent No. 5,972,192 ("Dubin"). The applicants respectfully request that this paper constitute the applicants' Interview Summary.

The status of the claims set forth in the Office Action dated 23 February 2006 is as follows:

- (A) Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-11, 13-17 and 24-95 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; and
- (B) Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-11, 13-17 and 24-95 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over the combination of Venkatraman and Dubin.

A. Response to Section 112 Rejection

The pending claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, on the grounds that these claims are indefinite. The applicants respectfully submit that the claims are definite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, because the claims include any process that anneals copper at a temperature that is less than or equal to the upper temperature limits recited in the claims. Therefore, the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of the pending claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

B. Response to Section 103 rejection

The pending claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over the combination of Venkatraman and Dubin. For the reasons discussed in the personal interview on 5 April 2006, the foregoing amendments to claim 1 overcome this rejection. Independent claims 6, 10, 11, 24, 30, 51, 57, 70 and 83 have been amended to include subject matter analogous to the subject matter of claim 1. Therefore, the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-11, 13-17, 24-37 and 42-95 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over the combination of Venkatraman and Dubin.

In light of the foregoing, the pending claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the cited references. The applicants accordingly request reconsideration of the application and respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a teleconference would expedite prosecution of the application, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at (206) 359-3258.

Respectfully submitted,
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